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in five parts, each part containing fifteen plates. Not more than two parts a year will be issued, and they will be sold to *subscribers only* at four guineas each part. This proposed work will be a handsome addition to the libraries of all who can afford so great a luxury, and we trust that, as the price is beyond the means of most students of ornithology, copies will at least be secured for the principal libraries of this country. It will give us pleasure to forward subscriptions for the work, or Mr. Elliot can be addressed direct, care of the Zoological Society, London.

**MONOGRAPH OF THE KINGFISHERS.\***—We have already called attention to this beautiful monograph, six parts of which, containing the letter-press and plates of *forty-nine* species of this brilliant family of birds, have been received. The plates are most beautifully executed in colors by Mr. KEULEMANS, and the work is in every way worthy the support of Ornithologists in this country, and of all others who may wish for a handsome work for their library or drawing room. At present we notice that our own copy is the only one taken in America, but we trust that this will not be so long, and that before the last part is issued we shall see the names of several of our patrons of science on the list; but if they are to be there it must be done soon, as only two hundred copies of the work will be published, and the sixth number, issued in October last, shows already a list of one hundred and twenty subscribers. The work is to be completed in fourteen parts, each part containing at least eight plates. Professor MURIE is to contribute a chapter on the Anatomy and Osteology of the Kingfishers illustrated by plates.

**A MONOGRAPH OF THE CAPITONIDÆ.†**—We take pleasure in calling attention to the prospectus of this companion work to Mr. Sharpe's "Monograph of the Kingfishers." Like the latter birds, the Capitonidæ are possessed of the most brilliant and varied plumage, and considered as a whole, they are scarcely surpassed in beauty by any other family of the *Picariae*.

"The authors feel that their experience in India has enabled them to gain a considerable knowledge of the general characteristics of the Eastern members of the family, while the recent exertions of Naturalists in Africa and South America, have materially contributed to elucidate the economy of the Barbets inhabiting these portions of the globe. While acknowledging the great amount of work that has been done of late years with regard to the Barbets, the authors cannot but believe that a Monograph of the family, giving full descriptions of the birds, their structure, habits, and general economy, accompanied by good illustrations of every species, will be an acceptable contribution to Ornithological Science. To render the work up to the standard which the present state of Science demands, no efforts will be spared; and it is intended to be not only a trustworthy hand-book of reference to the scientific student, but also a handsome addition to the Library or the Drawing-Room. The fact that the plates will be executed by Mr. J. G. Keulemans will be a sufficient guarantee for the excellence of this portion of the undertaking."

\* By R. B. Sharpe. Fourteen parts, 4to. Zoological Society, London. The subscription price of this work is 10s. 6d. each part. Orders will be taken at the *Naturalists' Agency* at the rate of \$3.50 (currency) a part, or subscribers can remit directly to the authors, care of the *Zoological Society*, 11 Hanover Square, LONDON, W.

† By C. H. T. Marshall and G. F. L. Marshall. Eleven parts, 4to. Zoological Society, London. We shall be pleased to forward subscriptions at the same rates as for the "Monograph of Kingfishers," or the authors can be addressed care of the Zoological Society.

The work will be published in quarterly parts. Each part will contain eight beautifully colored lithographs, with accompanying letter-press. The whole work will contain about eighty plates, and will be completed in eleven parts. The first number is announced for January, 1870.

THE GEOLOGY OF ALASKA.\*—The most interesting results of Mr. Dall's explorations are the determination of the facts that west of the 105th degree of longitude the Alaskan coast is rising, that the former violence of volcanic forces is diminishing throughout the territory, and that there are no evidences of general glacial action. Mr. Dall has travelled thirteen hundred miles up the valley of the Yukon, and explored on the shores of Norton Sound, without obtaining any evidences of glacial action. The whole territory north of the Alaskan Mountains could not, therefore, have been covered by the same general sheet of ice which has scratched the section east of the Rocky Mountains.

This raises an unexpected obstacle in the path both of the hypothesis of a general terrestrial glacial sheet, and the theory of floating ice. In either case it will be difficult to explain the absence of scratches on the northern slope of the Alaskan Mountains when all the rest of North-eastern America must have been covered by ice.

If Alaska was covered by the waters of the Pacific, why did not the floating icebergs score the surface, and if it was out of water during the glacial epoch, why did not the great terrestrial glacier of the east have its counterpart in the Arctic valley of the Yukon?

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## NATURAL HISTORY MISCELLANY.

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### BOTANY.

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SPONTANEOUS MOTION OF PROTOPLASM.—Professor J. B. Schnetzler records in the "Archives des Sciences Physiques et Naturelles," some observations on the spontaneous motion of the protoplasm in the cells of the leaves of the common water weed, *Anacharis alsinastrum*. The writer remarks that whether the cause of the motion is found, as some have maintained, in the successive contractions or vibrations of the exterior layer of the protoplasm, which transmit themselves to the interior layers; or whether the successive displacements of the molecules is produced by causes purely mechanical, as others have held, it still remains to be explained what produces these contractions or displacements. It is incontestable that they are found only in living protoplasm. Professor Schnetzler believes that the principal cause which provokes the motion

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\* Observations on the Geology of Alaska, by W. H. Dall, 8vo, pamph., 12 pp. From the Alaska Coast Pilot, published by the Coast Survey.